

*“There can be no such thing as a lasting peace that is not founded on the decent treatment of human beings.”*

*John W. Davis*

*Chairman, Committee on Human Rights*

COMMISSION TO STUDY THE ORGANIZATION OF PEACE

James T. Shotwell, *Chairman*

45 East 65th Street, New York 21, N. Y.

---

FOLLOWING the Dumbarton Oaks Proposals a Committee on Human Rights was formed by the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace. The purpose is to aid in implementing Chapter IX of the Proposals, which declares that the coming world organization should "promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms." The members of the Committee on Human Rights are:

John W. Davis, *Chairman*

Henry A. Atkinson

Malcolm W. Davis

Monroe E. Deutsch

Clark M. Eichelberger

John Ellington

Arthur J. Goldsmith

Livingston Hartley

Rev. John LaFarge, S.J.

Most Rev. Robert E. Lucey, D.D.

Jeremiah Mahoney

Thomas H. Mahony

George Z. Medalie

William Allan Neilson

O. Frederick Nolde

Robert Norton

Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam

Rt. Rev. Edward L. Parsons

James N. Rosenberg

James T. Shotwell

Henry P. Van Dusen

Allen Wardwell

Quincy Wright

Margaret Olson, *Secretary*

This Committee has prepared a statement which was issued to the public in a radio address by the Honorable John W. Davis on February 4th, 1945, in which address Mr. Davis read the entire statement of the Human Rights Committee.

Those who desire to aid the endeavors of the Committee on Human Rights toward the securing of a Commission on Human Rights as an integral part of the coming world organization should send their checks to the following address:

COMMISSION TO STUDY THE ORGANIZATION OF PEACE  
45 East 65th Street, New York 21, New York

*Contributions to the Commission may be deducted in computing income taxes.*

John W. Davis—

I HOLD IN MY HAND a paper signed by 150 distinguished Americans. It was prepared under the auspices of the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace headed by that great scholar and diligent public servant, Dr. James T. Shotwell. The names of these signers are known throughout the country, and had I time to read the list you would realize that almost no field of activity is unrepresented. It is their message that I am asked to deliver this afternoon. I will let them speak in the words of the document they have signed:

*"At Dumbarton Oaks the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and China took a momentous step in the age-long struggle for liberty by proposing to give international sanction to human rights. They proclaimed that in order to create 'conditions of stability and well-being which are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations' there must be international action to 'promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.' Thus they recognized that the violation of human rights any-*

*where may be a threat to world peace everywhere. To safeguard these rights they open the way for a permanent agency within the coming World Organization.*

*"For this action at Dumbarton Oaks the long march of history has blazed the path. Freedom-loving men won Magna Carta, the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, and the constitutions of many of the United Nations—this gives us faith.*

*"In recent times these historic acts by nations have led to the beginning of international recognition of human rights as in treaties, in the Covenant of the League of Nations, and in the Charter of the International Labor Organization.*

*"Then in our generation the forces of oppression and militarism defiantly sought to reverse the process. The flagrant violation of human rights by Nazi and Fascist states, revolting to the conscience of mankind, stands as a symbol of an ever-present threat to peace and freedom. First discriminating against, next persecuting, then butchering helpless men, women and children they later enslaved small unoffending nations and ruthlessly set out to conquer the world. Not only was this an attack on the inherent rights of individuals but it was a direct attack on the moral and religious foundations of our society. At each dreadful step civilized men and nations were horrified. Too long we forgot that to defend man's freedom is man's endless battle;*

*that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty for all nations, great as well as small, and for their citizens.*

*"In face of dangers now so evident, the United Nations have once more stressed the essential place of human rights. President Roosevelt rallied the world to the Four Freedoms as the common goal. In approving the Atlantic Charter the United Nations called for complete victory to preserve human rights and justice in their own lands as well as other lands.*

*"A major objective of our foreign policy, as stated by Secretary of State Stettinius, is the encouragement of all those conditions of international life favorable to the development by men and women everywhere of the institutions of a free and democratic way of life, in accordance with their own customs and desires.*

*"Dumbarton Oaks is both a promise and a challenge—a challenge to us to see that the promise is fulfilled.*

*"For the maintenance of human rights we seek the support of all peace-loving nations and all men of good will. Let us make sure that those who shall have died in this war to overcome the gravest of all threats to men's freedom shall not have died in vain and that the coming generations shall live in a peaceful world in which human rights and fundamental freedoms are honored.*

*"To this end we urge the United Nations to create in the coming World Organization a Commission on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms."*

That is what they wish me to say on their behalf; and for these views they ask the approval and support of public opinion in the United States. Not many, I believe, will dissent. Let us think about it for a moment. Some day, we hope, believe and are sure that this war will end in the complete defeat of our enemies. Their mad dream of world conquest will be over and the vast crimes they have committed will be avenged. Once more we shall have proved by force of arms that man is both too weak to wield unlimited power and, thank God, too noble to submit to it.

Then will come the slow, laborious and painful task of setting the world to rights, and of building a world system under which decent men, honest men, men who respect themselves and respect others, can live with security in freedom, and in peace. Who thinks that this will be easy? We can and we will drive marauding nations back to their rightful boundaries. We can and we will strike the weapons from their murderous hands. We can and we will punish those who brought all the present misery on the world; and to the limit of our resources, we can bind up the wounds they have made and succor the

multitudes whom they have tried to starve. Thereafter, building for the long future, while no less imperative, may prove to be hardly less difficult.

The Dumbarton Oaks Plan is a good beginning, but we must frankly recognize that it is only a beginning. Out of it we hope there will come an organization where in Whittier's words "the nations lift their right hand up and swear their oath of freedom." We have high hope that this organization will advance the rule of law among nations as among men and that it will have sufficient force to bridle the restless, curb the ambitious and punish the evil-doer. We hope also that in the language of the Dumbarton Oaks Proposals it will be able to "promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms."

The proposal I have just read to you urges the setting up of a commission on human rights and fundamental freedoms directed to this end. It is a necessary part of permanent peace for there can be no such thing as a lasting peace that is not founded on the decent treatment of human beings.

Nations can be considered free and independent only when they have shaken off the shackle of out-

side power and become masters of their own destiny. Individuals are free only when others cannot force them into action against their will. The chief duty of all government as we Americans conceive it is to preserve, both for the nation itself and for its individual citizens, the freedoms they have the right to enjoy. It has been well said, however, that "he only is free who lives among free men" and this can only come about when every human being throughout the world, of whatever nationality, or creed, or race, or color, east or west, may, under just and equal laws, live out his life as he best chooses so long as he does no injury to his neighbor.

Truly this is a high goal and certainly a long, long road. Our grandchildren and their grandchildren may never see its end. The teachings of history warn us that the advance can only be slow and that success will require patience rivaling the Infinite. Human nature cannot be changed by act of parliament or congress. Bigotry cannot be eradicated by a stroke of the pen, or by mere creation of a commission. But all this is no reason why men of today should not set their feet on the path. They must set their feet on this path if civilization is to be justified by its works.



One often hears the statement that if this or that result does not follow our victory the war will have been fought in vain. I do not care for this expression. To put down the lawless outrage of the Germans and the Japanese is worth all and everything it costs, and when that has been achieved no man will have the right to say the struggle was in vain. Victory over evil is never vain. But if, after this war, there shall come to the world a deeper love of liberty and a new birth of freedom, countless generations of men will kneel and bless our soldiers, sailors and air men for their sacrifice on the bloodstained fields of battle.

## *List of Signers*

Winthrop W. Aldrich	Everett R. Clinchy
Ernest Angell	Henry Sloane Coffin
Henry A. Atkinson	Kenneth Colegrove
Frank Aydelotte	Edward A. Conway, S.J.
Margaret Culkin Banning	Frederic R. Coudert
Ulric Bell	Gardner Cowles, Jr.
Clarence A. Berdahl	Samuel H. Cross
Mary McCleod Bethune	Bartley C. Crum
George Biddle	Virginus Dabney
Mrs. Sidney C. Borg	Russell Davenport
W. Russell Bowie	John W. Davis
Henry Breckinridge	Malcolm W. Davis
Mrs. Arthur Brin	Mrs. Henry P. Davison
Louis Bromfield	John Foster Dulles
Philip Marshall Brown	Clarence A. Dykstra
Nicholas Murray Butler	Clark M. Eichelberger
Henry B. Cabot	George Fielding Eliot
Cass Canfield	Edwin Embree
Elmer A. Carter	Philo T. Farnsworth
Carrie Chapman Catt	Charles G. Fenwick
Samuel McCrea Cavert	Marshall Field
Joseph P. Chamberlain	Louis Finkelstein
Ben M. Cherrington	Thomas K. Finletter
John L. Childs	Denna F. Fleming
Grenville Clark	George B. Ford

Christian Gauss  
James W. Gerard  
Harry D. Gideonse  
Charles K. Gilbert  
Virginia C. Gildersleeve  
Arthur J. Goldsmith  
Frank P. Graham  
W. W. Grant  
William Green  
Francis S. Harmon  
Henry I. Harriman  
Melvin D. Hildreth  
William Ernest Hocking  
Arthur N. Holcombe  
Ernest M. Hopkins  
Oscar I. Janowsky  
Alvin Johnson  
Rufus M. Jones  
Foster Kennedy  
Frank Kingdon  
John LaFarge, S.J.  
Thomas W. Lamont  
Hugh McK. Landon  
Chester La Roche  
Henry Smith Leiper  
Beryl Harold Levy  
William Draper Lewis  
William Mather Lewis

Clarence C. Little  
Robert E. Lucey  
Thomas H. Mahony  
Charles E. Martin  
Frederick C. McKee  
Francis E. McMahon  
George Z. Medalie  
William P. Merrill  
Clark H. Minor  
Hugh Moore  
George W. Morgan  
Julian Morgenstern  
Roland S. Morris  
S. D. Myres, Jr.  
Philip C. Nash  
John W. Nason  
William Allan Neilson  
G. Bernard Noble  
Robert Norton  
G. Ashton Oldham  
William Church Osborn  
G. Bromley Oxnam  
Edward L. Parsons  
Ernest Minor Patterson  
James G. Patton  
Amos J. Peaslee  
Lewis Perry  
Ralph Barton Perry

Clarence E. Pickett  
Daniel A. Poling  
James P. Pope  
Joseph M. Proskauer  
Ruth Bryan Owen Rhode  
James N. Rosenberg  
George Rublee  
John A. Ryan  
Richard B. Scandrett, Jr.  
Harry Scherman  
William Jay Schieffelin  
Lewis B. Schwellenbach  
Murray Seasingood  
Lisa Sergio  
Guy Emery Shipler  
James T. Shotwell  
George N. Shuster  
Harper Sibley  
Spyros P. Skouras  
Preston Slosson  
Herbert E. Smith  
Mrs. Wm. Dick Sporborg  
Robert G. Sproul

Eugene Staley  
Waldo E. Stephens  
Arthur Sweetser  
Raymond Swing  
Herbert Bayard Swope  
Booth Tarkington  
Dorothy Thompson  
Channing H. Tobias  
Henry St. George Tucker  
Carl Van Doren  
Henry P. Van Dusen  
Sarah Wambaugh  
Walter F. Wanger  
James P. Warburg  
Allen Wardwell  
Harry Warner  
Robert J. Watt  
W. W. Waymack  
Sumner Welles  
Ernest H. Wilkins  
C.-E. A. Winslow  
Matthew Woll  
Quincy Wright